



**AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE
RETURNS TO THE WHITE HOUSE
TO CELEBRATE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF
"TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD"**

**AFI Brings Special Screening to the White House
Followed by National Television Broadcast**

President Obama to Introduce Both Events

LOS ANGELES, CA, April 4, 2012 – The American Film Institute (AFI), in conjunction with USA Network and Universal Pictures, will celebrate the 50th anniversary of TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD at the White House on Thursday, April 5 and with the nation on Saturday, April 7. AFI was created in the White House Rose Garden in 1965, when President Lyndon B. Johnson set a national mandate to “bring together leading artists of the film industry, outstanding educators and young men and women who wish to pursue the art form as their life’s work.”

President Obama will introduce the film at a special screening in the White House Family Theater with an audience that includes children from DC area schools as well as Mary Badham, who portrayed Scout in the film; Gregory Peck’s family, including wife Veronique; and AFI Trustees Sir Howard Stringer, Chairman of Sony Corporation, Ron Meyer, President and COO of Universal Studios and Bob Gazzale, AFI President and CEO. President Obama will then celebrate the film with the nation through a special primetime broadcast on USA Network at 8:00 p.m. ET/PT on April 7.

"I'm deeply honored that President Obama will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD by introducing it to a national audience," said Harper Lee, author of the Pulitzer Prize winning novel on which the movie is based. "I believe it remains the best translation of a book to film ever made, and I'm proud to know that Gregory Peck's portrayal of Atticus Finch lives on – in a world that needs him now more than ever."

"TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD is an American treasure – a film of family and fatherhood, justice and equality – all so richly embodied in the character of Atticus Finch," said Bob Gazzale, AFI President and CEO. "We are honored to screen the film in the White House, where AFI was born, and to partner with USA Network and Universal Pictures to inspire generations of movie lovers to discover and rediscover this classic American film."

AFI proposed the anniversary celebration to the White House in early January and learned last month that President Obama would be available to participate on April 5 – a timely date as it marks the late Gregory Peck's 96th birthday. Peck had a long association with the American Film Institute, serving as **Founding Chair of the AFI Board of Trustees** from 1967 to 1969, and receiving the **AFI Life Achievement Award** – the highest honor for a career in film – in 1989.

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD ranks 25th on **AFI's 100 Years... 100 Movies** list of greatest American films, and AFI named Atticus Finch the greatest hero in this history of American film when it announced its **AFI's 100 Years... 100 Heroes and Villains** list in 2003. AFI also recognized the film for its #1 ranking of Best Courtroom Dramas in **AFI's 10 Top 10** list and its #2 ranking on **AFI's 100 Years... 100 Cheers** America's Most Inspiring Films list, just behind IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE. The film, which premiered in Los Angeles on Christmas day in 1962 and opened wide in 1963, was directed by Robert Mulligan and produced by Alan J. Pakula.



President Obama hosts a screening of *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD* in the White House Family Theater on April 5, 2012. Guests included local students from Washington-Lee High School, Mary Badham Wilt, the actress who played Scout, and Veronique Peck, widow of Gregory Peck who played Atticus Finch. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)